



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

AMERICA'S POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO A CONSTRUCTIVE PEACE

BY MORRIS HILLQUIT,
New York.

The time has passed when two or more great nations could wage war without involving the rest of the world. Today the international organism of human civilization is so delicately attuned that the slightest disturbance in any of its parts immediately communicates itself to the whole body.

The United States can no more be indifferent to the frightful ravages of the European cataclysm than the brain of a man can be indifferent to an acute disorder of his heart. We are united with the leading countries of Europe by intimate and vital ties. Every economic or social improvement, every scientific or spiritual advance and every progress of the arts on the other side of the ocean, raises our standards of thinking, feeling and living, and every retrogression in these fields of human endeavor checks our own progress, deteriorates our own worth.

The war, which is fought on battlefields more than three thousand miles removed from us, is disarranging the entire social and industrial fabric of this country. We are involuntarily drawn into the maelstrom of the war in everything but the physical fighting.

I hold that the United States has vital interests and imperative duties in this war, and should exert every atom of power to bring about a speedy and lasting peace between the nations.

How can this great task be accomplished?

There are three main channels through which modern countries interact on each other—political, economic and spiritual. If the people of the United States have the power to influence the belligerent nations in favor of a cessation of hostilities, such power must be found in one or more of these channels; and I maintain that we may exercise a decisive influence on the destinies of the world-war in all three directions.

Politically the nations are almost equally divided into belligerents and non-combatants. One-half of the world is under arms,

striving for mutual extermination, while the other half witnesses the inhuman spectacle with impotent dismay.

If all the nations at peace, all American republics and all neutral powers of Europe and Asia, would join in a definite and urgent offer of mediation, the proposal would come with such commanding moral force that it could not be long ignored by the belligerent powers.

Every neutral country is deeply and disastrously affected by the war and wishes to see peace. But the world is inert and inactive for lack of leadership. It is this leadership which we must assume. The United States is the largest, most powerful and influential of the neutral nations. It is also the most independent and secure. It is naturally placed in a position of leadership in this world-crisis. Our government could properly take it upon itself to organize a council of all neutral nations, a modern "International Concert of Powers" to conciliate the warring nations and not to relax in efforts until peace is finally and firmly established.

This may be a rather unconventional step in established diplomatic procedure, but the world has never faced a crisis as great as that through which we are now passing. The extraordinary situation calls for unusual methods, bold measures and big men.

Economically we have it within our power to minimize the ferocity of the European slaughter and perhaps to shorten its duration by cutting off our supply of arms, war equipments, ammunition and credits from all belligerent countries. It is barbarous enough to set the engines of industry to work manufacturing instruments for the assassination of an "enemy," but it is criminally culpable to produce such weapons for the killing of people with whom our country is supposed to be at peace. By furnishing arms to the belligerents we take an active part in the direct hostilities, and our part in it is all the more hideous and revolting because it is a cold-blooded traffic for profit. It is urged that if we refused to export arms and ammunitions, it would aid Germany as against the allies, and result in increasing militarism in Europe because each country would be forced to increase its production of military supplies in times of peace. These arguments bear on their face the trade-mark of the armor-plate works and are as full of holes as the main products of these works. The fact is that our broadminded manufacturers of war supplies sell indiscriminately to both sides, and the chances are

that wars would be rarer and milder if each country had to depend on its own resources for waging warfare.

Morally we may influence the course of the European war by our general attitude. Our people, and particularly our press, are too much inclined to view the appalling tragedy on the other side of the Atlantic in the light of a sport. We follow the moves of the hostile armies with an interest akin to that which we feel towards a fascinating chess play or an exciting ball game. We pick the winner, we take sides. In the people of the belligerent countries such an attitude is excusable. War is a pathological state and creates a morbid psychology. But we have no such excuse. Our press, our pulpit and our lecture platforms should resound with emphatic protests against the wholesale carnage and with consistent and persistent councils of peace. Our views and sentiments are instantly communicated by the electric spark to the entire world. We speak daily to the people of Europe—let us speak to them of the horrors of their war and of the blessings of peace, and eventually they must hear us.

But there is another and greater moral service which we may render to our unfortunate fellow-men in Europe—the service of example.

This war will end some day. Whether peace will come sooner through neutral influences, or whether it will come later as the result of the physical exhaustion of the combatants, come it must some time. And when this greatest of all wars in history will be over, the world will have its greatest opportunity for laying the foundations of eternal peace, of a civilization worthy of the name. This war is bound to have a great sobering effect upon mankind. It has robbed warfare of its romantic halo and has revealed it in all its ugly and brutal nakedness—a mutual butchery by factory methods, a general carnage on land, water and in the air, a prostitution of all the sciences and arts to the task of destroying human life. It has demonstrated the ruinous character of the policy of imperialism and the dangerous fallacy of militarism.

When the smoke of the battle will be cleared, and the masses now in the war will cast their eyes around them, they will encounter nothing but ruin and devastation, nothing but evidences of madness, savagery and shame, the total and fatal collapse of a false civilization based on the philosophy of the jungle, on the rule of the claw

and the fang. They will find but little comfort, little promise in old Europe. They will turn to us, the great democratic republic in the new world, which alone of all great world-powers has managed to preserve sanity and peace. What shall we offer them? Shall it be the old, destructive gospel of armament, "preparedness" and militarism, or shall it be a message of peace, a promise of a better, saner civilization? By our own example of peace and good-will we may help to usher in an era of brotherhood into the history of the human race. This is the signal opportunity that the great world-crisis offers us. Let us not fail.